

Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 TUNIS 00488 241433Z

43

ACTION SMI-01

INFO OCT-01 NEA-09 ISO-00 OES-05 FBOE-00 A-01 OPR-02 RSC-01

/020 W

----- 025752

P 241410Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8037

UNCLAS TUNIS 0488

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TS AART SCUL ABLD

SUBJECT: POTENTIAL GIFT TO UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT BY
MRS. POE BURLING

REF: STATE 014489

1. POST WELCOMES MR. BLITZER'S VISIT TUNIS. DURING MOST RECENT UNPACKING OF SEVERAL CASES, SOME ITEMS HAVE COME TO LIGHT WHICH APPEAR TO EMBASSY TO BE OF SOME ARTISTIC VALUE. FOR EXAMPLE, AN 8-INCH VASE OF FRAGILE, OPAQUE GLASS, IN PERFECT CONDITION, COULD PERHAPS BE OF ROMAN ANTIGUITY. MRS. BURLING STATED THAT IN THE COLLECTION THERE WAS QUOTE A PRICELESS VASE WHICH SHOULD BE IN A MUSEUM UNQUOTE. THIS COULD BE IT. THERE ARE SEVERAL INTERESTING BRONZE PIECES, ONE OF WHICH COULD BE AN ANCIENT CHINESE DRINKING CUP ON TRIPOD LEGS. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF SMALL TO MEDIUM SIZE ALABASTER BOWLS AND VASES WHICH MAY BE OF ROMAN ORIGIN. THE AFRICAN WORK, ESPECIALLY THE WOOD CARVINGS, ALSO LOOKS TO BE OF SPECIAL ARTISTIC VALUE.

2. POST IS UNCERTAIN AS TO EXACT ORIGIN OF ART OBJECTS. THE ORIGINAL OWNER OF COLLECTION WAS GEORGE SEBASTIAN, A RUMANIAN WHO LATER BECAME NATURALIZED AMERICAN. HE MAINTAINED A RESIDENCE IN HAMMAMET, TUNISIA FROM THE 1920'S ONWARD. IN THE 1930'S SEBASTIAN TRAVELED IN AFRICA AND CHINA IN THE COMPANY
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 TUNIS 00488 241433Z

OF AN AMERICAN ART COLLECTOR WHO WAS PROCURING ITEMS

FOR AN AMERICAN MUSEUM. IT WAS DURING THIS PERIOD THAT THE PRESENT COLLECTION WAS COMPILED. THIRTEEN OR FOURTEEN YEARS AGO SEBASTIAN GAVE UP HIS HOME IN HAMMAMET. PART OF HIS LIBRARY, PAINTINGS AND ART OBJECTS, WHICH MAKE UP THE BURLING GIFT, HE STORED IN THE HOME OF A FRIEND IN SIDI BOU SAID, TUNISIA. WE UNDERSTAND THAT HE SENT ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO PARIS FOR STORAGE. MRS. BURLING INFORMED US THAT FOLLOWING HER VISIT TO TUNIS SHE WAS GOING TO PARIS TO ALSO MAKE DISPOSITION OF THE ITEMS STORED THERE.

3. SINCE MRS. BURLING REQUESTED EMBASSY NOT DISCUSS GIFT WITH TUNISIAN AUTHORITIES, EMBASSY DID NOT INQUIRE RE POSSIBLE APPLICABILITY OF TUNISIAN LAW. EMBASSY WOULD HOPE THAT MAJOR PART OF LIBRARY GIFT WILL REMAIN IN EMBASSY RATHER THAN BEING SHIPPED ELSEWHERE.

4. IF MR. BLITZER CAN ARRIVE ON OR ABOUT FEB 10, EMBASSY WILL MAKE A POINT TO HAVE ALL ITEMS UNPACKED AND READY FOR HIS EXAMINATION.
SEELYE

UNCLASSIFIED

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: GIFTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 JAN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975TUNIS00488
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750027-0435
From: TUNIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750121/aaaaasec.tel
Line Count: 82
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SMI
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 STATE 014489
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <09 APR 2003 by RuthemTJ>; APPROVED <18 FEB 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: POTENTIAL GIFT TO UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT BY MRS. POE BURLING
TAGS: AART, SCUL, ABLD, TS
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006